meeting the increasing demands of energy, keeping in view the limited availability of petroleum resources including gas;

(b) what is the percentage of nuclear energy as part of the total electricity output in the country;

(c) whether there is any proposal to augment investment in exploiting nuclear energy in the country;

(d) whether any study has been prepared on the costs and benefits of nuclear power expansion in the country; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Government is considering all fuel options for meeting the increasing demands of energy of the country. Nuclear power is one such option.

(b) During the year 2003-04 the electricity generated from nuclear power was 17,861 Million Units (MUs). This is about 3.2% of the electricity generated by the utilities in the country.

(c) Yes, Sir. Government has approved setting up of nine nuclear power reactors, which are at various stages of construction. The completion cost of these projects is around Rs. 29,500 crores.

(d) Yes, Sir, A study on "Long term cost-effectiveness of nuclear energy" was carried out by NPCIL in 1998-99. This study has now been updated in June, 2004 based on current inputs.

(e) The study evaluated generation cost of electricity produced by nuclear power *vis-a-vis* Thermal Power, as base load Central generating stations. Factors such as cost of the project, financing cost, cost of fuels alongwith its transportation etc. were considered. The study suggests that the electricity from nuclear power at distances of about 800 kms from coal pit heads is a long term cost effective option.

Torture of Iraqi prisoners

*259. PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Iraqi prisoners at Abu Gharib prison and elsewhere were subjected to unprecedented torture and immoral abuse of their rights as human beings; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and the measures intended by India to get the heinous crime stopped?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Government have seen reports of abuse and ill-treatment of Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib prison and elsewhere in Iraq at the hands of elements in the Coalition Forces.

(b) Government consider the ill-treatment and abuse of Iraqi prisoners abhorrent. Government have noted the regret expressed at highest level in the countries concerned at the heinous acts and the intentions of their Governments to take corrective and puniiive steps through their military, administrative and legal system. Government hope that these steps will prevent recurrence of such practices.

Amendments in the Emigration Act, 1983

*260. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to bring any amendments in the Emigration Act of 1983 to improve the facilities for job-seekers in the Gulf countries;

(b) whether Government propose to open new protector of emigrant offices in Kerala;

(c) Government's reaction thereto;

(d) whether any practical difficulty exists to open new certificate attesting centres in the State;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether Government are considering to explore the possibilities to overcome such difficulties; if any?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) to (f) In view of ban on creation of new posts, the Central Government have authorised thirteen State Governments including the Government of Kerala to authenticate the educational qualifications after proper verification.